

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (currently amended) A method for screening electronic messages, wherein such an electronic message has a reply address for a sender and an address for a designated receiver of the message, the method comprising the steps of:

a) determining, by a screening agent for the a-designated receiver of a first such a one of the electronic messages from a sender, whether the electronic message includes a pass, the pass having been generated by the screening agent from an earlier-received version of the electronic message from the receiver;

b) forwarding such a one of the first-electronic messages to the receiver by the screening agent; responsive to the message having such a the-pass; and

c) generating a pass and generating a notice to the sender for such a one of the electronic messages by the screening agent; responsive to the message not having such a the-pass, wherein the notice includes including information making the pass available to the sender and requesting the sender to return the pass; to an indicated address, wherein the pass is particularized for the sender by including in the pass an encrypted version of the sender's address received in the electronic message, and wherein step a) includes determining whether such a one of the electronic messages has such a pass and whether the encrypted address of the pass matches the message's sender address, a pass for the first electronic message.

2. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein there are a plurality of the first electronic messages and the method comprises the step of:

intercepting the ~~first~~ electronic messages by the a-screening agent for the designated receiver; and

performing steps a), b) and c) for each one of the respective ~~first~~ electronic messages.

3. (currently amended) The method of claim 2, wherein ~~the first electronic messages have respective reply addresses, and~~ the method comprises the step of:

 sending the respective passes to the respective senders at the reply addresses of the respective electronic messages.

4. (currently amended) The method of claim 3, wherein the sending includes concatenating at least a portion of such a pass to a reply address of an ~~second~~ electronic message.

5. (currently amended) The method of claim 3, wherein the sending includes sending at least portion of such a pass in an attachment to an ~~second~~ electronic message

6. (original) The method of claim 2, wherein such a notice includes a reference which points to a source for the pass.

7. (original) The method of claim 6, wherein the source includes a web page.

8. (currently amended) A computer program product in a computer readable media for use in a data processing system for screening electronic messages, wherein such an electronic message has a reply address for a sender and an address for a designated receiver of the message, the computer program product comprising:

first instructions for a screening agent for determining, for the a-designated receiver of such a first one of the electronic messages from a sender, whether the electronic message includes a pass, the pass having been generated by the screening agent from an earlier-received version of the electronic message from the receiver;

second instructions for the screening agent for forwarding the first such a one of the electronic messages to the receiver, responsive to the message having such a the pass;

third instructions for the screening agent for generating such a pass for such a one of the electronic messages responsive to the message not having such a pass; and

fourth third instructions for the screening agent for generating a notice to the sender, responsive to the such a one of the messages not having such a the pass, including information making the pass available to the sender and requesting the sender to return the pass, to an indicated address, wherein the pass generated by the third instructions is particularized for the sender by including in the pass an encrypted version of the sender's address received in the electronic message, and wherein the first instructions include instructions for determining whether such a one of the electronic messages has such a pass and whether the encrypted address of the pass matches the message's sender address. a pass for the first electronic message.

9. (currently amended) The computer program product of claim 8, wherein there are a plurality of the first electronic messages, and the computer program product comprises:

fifthfourth instructions for the screening agent for intercepting the first electronic messages for the designated receiver, wherein the first, second and third instructions are executed for each one of the respective first electronic messages.

10. (currently amended) The computer program product of claim 9, wherein the first electronic messages have respective reply addresses, and the computer program product comprises:

~~sixth~~^{fifth} instructions for sending the respective passes to the respective senders at the reply addresses of the respective electronic messages.

11. (currently amended) The computer program product of claim 10, wherein the sending includes concatenating at least a portion of such a pass to a reply address of an ~~second~~ electronic message.

12. (currently amended) The computer program product of claim 10, wherein the sending includes sending at least portion of such a pass in an attachment to an ~~second~~ electronic message

13. (original) The computer program product of claim 9, wherein such a notice includes a reference which points to a source for the pass.

14. (original) The computer program product of claim 13, wherein the source includes a web page.

15. (currently amended) A system for screening electronic messages, wherein such an electronic message has a reply address for a sender and an address for a designated receiver of the message, the system comprising:

first means for determining, by a screening agent for the a-designated receiver of such a first one of the electronic messages from a sender, whether the electronic message includes a pass, the pass having been generated by the screening agent from an earlier-received version of the electronic message from the receiver;

second means for forwarding the first such a one of the electronic messages by the screening agent to the receiver; responsive to the message having such a the pass;

third means for generating such a pass for such a one of the electronic messages by the screening agent responsive to the message not having such a pass; and

fourththird means for generating a notice to the sender by the screening agent, responsive to the such a one of the messages not having the pass, including information making the pass available to the sender and requesting the sender to return the pass, to an indicated address, wherein the pass generated by the third means is particularized for the sender by the screening agent including in the pass an encrypted version of the sender's address received in the first one of the electronic message, and wherein the first means include means for determining whether such a one of the electronic messages has such a pass and whether the encrypted address of the pass matches the message's sender address a pass for the first electronic message.

16. (currently amended) The system of claim 15, wherein there are a plurality of ~~first~~ electronic messages and the system comprises:

fifthfourth means for intercepting the first electronic messages by a screening agent for the designated receiver, wherein for each one of the respective first electronic messages the first means determines, for a designated receiver of the respective one of the first electronic messages, whether the electronic message includes a pass from the receiver, the second means forwards the electronic message to the receiver; responsive to the message having the pass, and the third means generates a notice to a sender of the message; responsive to the message not having the pass, wherein the notice includes information to advise the sender to return, to an indicated address, a pass for the electronic message generated on behalf of the designated receiver.

17. (currently amended) The system of claim 16, wherein ~~the first electronic messages have respective reply addresses,~~ and the system comprises:

means for sending the respective passes to the respective senders at the reply addresses of the respective electronic messages.

18. (currently amended) The system of claim 17, wherein the sending means includes means for concatenating at least a portion of such a pass to a reply address of an ~~second~~ electronic message.

19. (currently amended) The system of claim 17, wherein the sending means includes means for sending at least portion of such a pass in an attachment to an ~~second~~ electronic message

20. (original) The system of claim 16, wherein such a notice includes a reference which points to a source for the pass.

21. (original) The system of claim 20, wherein the source includes a web page.

22. (currently amended) An screening agent apparatus for screening electronic messages, wherein such an electronic message has a reply address for a sender and an address for a designated receiver of the message, the screening agent apparatus comprising:

a pass detection agent that determines, for the a-designated receiver of such a first-one of the electronic messages from a sender, whether the electronic message includes a pass, the pass having been generated by the screening agent apparatus from an earlier-received version of the electronic message from the receiver;

a forwarding agent, in communication with the pass detection agent, that forwards the first such a one of the electronic messages to the receiver, responsive to an indication by the pass detection agent that the message has such a the-pass; and

a notification agent, in communication with the pass detection agent, that generates a pass for such a one of the electronic messages and a notice to the sender, responsive to an indication by the pass detection agent that the message does not have such a the-pass, including information making the pass available to the sender and requesting the sender to return the pass- to an indicated address, wherein the pass generated by the notification agent is particularized for the sender by including in the pass an encrypted version of the sender's address received in the first one of the electronic messages, and wherein the pass detection agent determines whether such a one of the electronic messages has such a pass and whether the encrypted address of the pass matches the message's sender address. a pass for the first electronic message.

23. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 22, wherein there are a plurality of the first electronic messages and the apparatus comprises:

an intercepting agent, in communication with the pass detection agent, for intercepting the first electronic messages for the designated receiver, wherein for each one of the respective first electronic messages the pass detection agent determines, for a designated receiver of the respective one of the first-electronic messages, whether the electronic message includes a pass from the receiver, the forwarding agent forwards the electronic message to the receiver, responsive to the message having the pass, and the notification agent generates a notice to a sender of the message, responsive to the message not having the pass, the notice including

information requesting the sender to return, to an indicated address, a pass for the electronic message.

24. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 23, wherein the ~~first~~ electronic messages have respective reply addresses, and the notification agent sends the respective passes to the respective senders at the reply addresses of the respective electronic messages.

25. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 24, wherein the notification agent concatenates at least a portion of such a pass to a reply address of an ~~second~~ electronic message.

26. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 25, wherein the notification agent sends at least portion of such a pass in an attachment to an ~~second~~ electronic message

27. (original) The apparatus of claim 24, wherein such a notice includes a reference which points to a source for the pass.

28. (original) The apparatus of claim 27, wherein the source includes a web page.